

Memo of Record
Research, Economic Development and Commercialization Policy Group
Council on Postsecondary Education
November 6, 2006

The Research, Economic Development and Commercialization Policy Group, a committee of the Council on Postsecondary Education met Monday, November 6, 2006, at 8:00 a.m. at the Adult Education Conference Room of the Council Offices, Frankfort, Kentucky. Committee Chair John Hall presided.

Attendance The following members attended: John Hall, Committee Chair, Jim Skaggs, Ryan Quarles and Allyson Handley, Council Staff. Ron Greenberg, Ex Officio, and Kevin Canafax, were absent from this committee meeting.

Introductory Remarks Mr. John Hall called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees. The notes from the last meeting were approved.

Discussion Mr. Hall gave an overview of the meeting.
Dr. Allyson Handley began the discussion of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) initiative and referenced the lack of students in the pipeline for engineering schools, the changes to make high school curriculum more challenging, and the percent increase in STEM discipline baccalaureate graduates over an eight-year period. Dr. Handley informed the group of the Academic Competitiveness (AC) Grants and National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) Grants which were adopted by the President and Congress in February 2006. \$790 million has been appropriated to provide Pell eligible college students with financial incentives to pursue STEM and critical languages course work.

Dr. Handley described the STEM Task Force and the composition of that group. They will be charged with doing an inventory of current programs so a comprehensive plan can be developed. Dr. Lee Todd, President of the University of Kentucky, has agreed to chair this Task Force.

The CPE STEM Process:

- The Task Force will be large (approximately 100 participants) and will meet the first time for a day-long meeting in December. The Task Force will be divided into sector groups that will meet together and then in cross-sector groups.
- Subsequent meetings in January and February will conclude with a report and recommendation in March during the legislative session.

This is all pending approval by the full board at today's Council meeting. Ryan Quarles wondered how the Task Force members would be chosen. Dr. Handley indicated that in order to achieve the rapid turn-around-time required the members of the Task Force would be chosen by brainstorming and recommendations.

Discussion returned to the SMART Grants and information was distributed regarding these grants. Other materials distributed included information about the Meyerhoff Scholarship Program at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and the National Science Foundation PRISM Partnership in Georgia. These are examples of what can be accomplished when there is a coordinated campaign to develop STEM disciplines.

Mr. Hall raised the question of how the STEM pipeline eroded in Kentucky. Dr. Handley indicated that one problem is a K-12 curriculum that had become "watered down" over time. How a student performs in mathematics in high school is a strong indicator of their success in college. Work needs to be done to make the K-12 curriculum more rigorous and to make an investment in new STEM teachers and to provide enhanced professional development for current STEM teachers. Parents need to be educated about the importance of math and science for their children's success.

Mr. Hall asked if we have enough courses, enough teachers, and ultimately, enough students to take the courses if they are made available. Mr. Skaggs mentioned that KERA and HBI involved a more broad-based approach – quantity rather than quality. The Task Force could have profound effects if they are willing to make definitive recommendations.

Translational Research was briefly defined as the application of research to real-life events. The Translational Research Advisory Committee will be chaired by James Ramsey, President of the University of Louisville.

Mr. Hall recommended that WKU and the other regional universities be included in this initiative. The committee will organize a conference in the fall of 2007 to showcase translational research at Kentucky's public universities. Mr. Hall recommended that the conference be held in Louisville because of the business support there and Mr. Skaggs agreed. The recent National SBIR conference in Louisville will be the model for the Translational Research Conference.

The motion was made to approve the STEM Initiative. It was approved and seconded.

The meeting adjourned at 9:37 a.m.

Adjournment


Allyson Hughes Handley
Senior Policy Advisor for
Economic Initiatives


Pegge Woolums
Executive Secretary